



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

30 June 2011

## LETTER OF INTENT

### **Establishing a Sister Sanctuary Partnership between the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and the Government of Bermuda**

In keeping with the objectives of the United Nations Environment Programme Cartagena Convention's Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (to which the USA is a Contracting Party) and its Marine Mammal Action Plan's priority action to establish sister sanctuaries and to improve management of the population of humpback whales shared between nations, the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS) in the USA and the Government of Bermuda ("the Participants"), state our intention to build a model for international cooperation to protect the endangered humpback whale along its migratory pathway in the North Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea.

Currently, there is a paucity of knowledge regarding humpback whale migration in the North Atlantic and Wider Caribbean Region. Building on the examples of the existing Memoranda of Understanding between SBNMS and the Santuario de Mamíferos Marinos de la República Dominicana (SMMRD) and between France and NOAA, this joint initiative seeks to improve knowledge of the shared humpback whale population between SBNMS (feeding/nursery ground) and their migratory corridor in Bermuda. This knowledge could lead to establishing a sister sanctuary partnership between the Participants.

The Participants do not intend this Letter of Intent to be legally binding. Instead, this letter reflects the clear intention of the Participants to foster cooperation on activities of mutual interest and exchange experience through coordination of capacity building, research and education concerning the conservation, stewardship and management of the endangered humpback whale, the respective marine bank ecosystems they frequent and their migratory corridors.

The individuals acting as liaisons for establishing a sister sanctuary partnership are as follows:

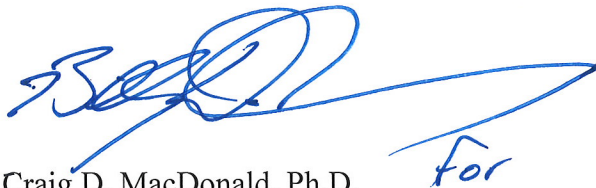
- Dr. Nathalie Ward (External Affairs Coordinator, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries); and

- Dr. Frederick W. Ming (Director, Department of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy, Government of Bermuda).

The Participants intend to work together in the following areas leading to the establishment of the sister sanctuary partnership:

- Exchange of humpback whale flukes for photo-identification matching for SBNMS/Bermuda humpback whale population studies and associated citizen science programs;
- Exchange of technical information, scientific data and practical experiences in managing marine mammal protected areas, including staff exchanges and site visits;
- Development and assessment of methodologies for natural resource protection within marine mammal protected areas; and
- Development, coordination and evaluation of research and monitoring programs, outreach and education programs, and community involvement mechanisms for management of marine mammal protected areas.

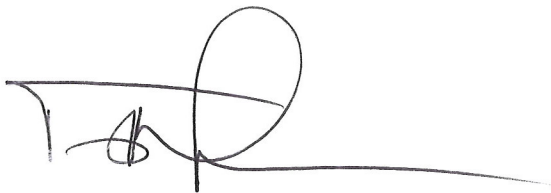
Respectfully,



Craig D. MacDonald, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

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Date



Frederick W. Ming, Ph.D.  
Director  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Ministry of Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy  
Government of Bermuda

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Date